

# Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

## Scanned Record Cover Page

<b>Inventory No:</b>	ABI.169
<b>Historic Name:</b>	Abington First Parish Congregational Church
<b>Common Name:</b>	Abington United Church of Christ
<b>Address:</b>	10 Bedford St
<b>City/Town:</b>	Abington
<b>Village/Neighborhood:</b>	Abington Center
<b>Local No:</b>	30.1
<b>Year Constructed:</b>	1849
<b>Architect(s):</b>	
<b>Architectural Style(s):</b>	Greek Revival
<b>Use(s):</b>	Church; Church Hall
<b>Significance:</b>	Architecture; Community Planning; Religion; Social History
<b>Area(s):</b>	ABI.B: Washington Street Area
<b>Designation(s):</b>	
<b>Building Materials(s):</b>	Roof: Asphalt Shingle Wall: Aluminum; Wood; Wood Clapboard



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125  
[www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)

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FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
294 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108

Section A

Area <u>B</u>	Form no. <u>30.1</u> <u>169</u>
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ABI.169

PHOTO (3x3" or 3x5", black & white)  
Staple to left side of form  
Photo number 30.1 & 30.1(b)

Town ABINGTON

Address ca. 400 Washington Street

Historic Name Congregational Church

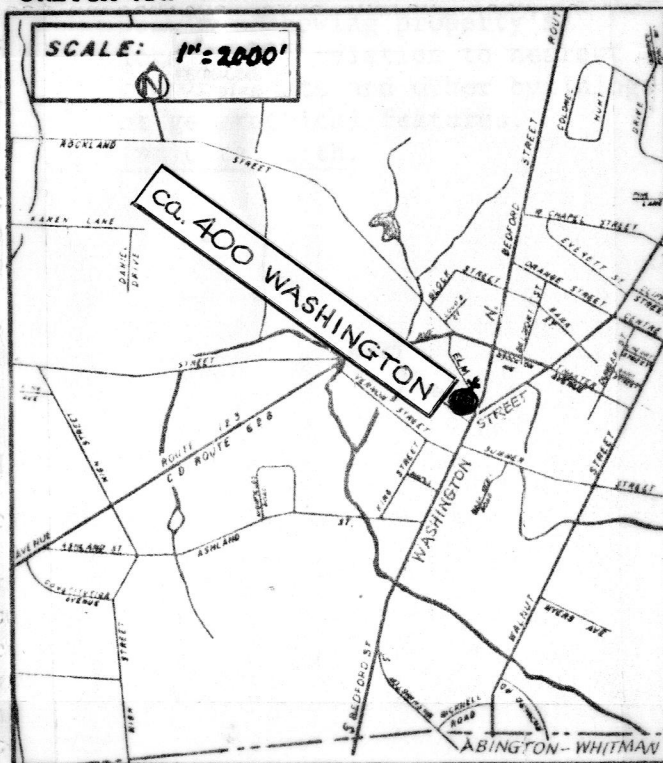
Use: Original Church

Present Church

Ownership: ☐ Private individual  
Private organization Abington  
United Church of Christ  
Public \_\_\_\_\_

Original owner Congregational Society

SKETCH MAP



DESCRIPTION:

Date 1849

Source Church Records

Style Greek Revival

Architect ?

Exterior wall fabric Clapboard

Outbuildings \_\_\_\_\_

Major alterations (with dates) Parish

Hall wing added on south side, opening  
from Niles Street, 1955

Moved \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approx. acreage .59 Acres

Setting On State Highway 18 (Church Hill)

in a section still zoned as "Medium

Density Residential"

Recorded by Martha C. Campbell, Researcher  
Laurie F. Chandler Chm.  
Organization Abington Historical Commission

Date FEB 24 1981

# ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within community)

This public building style of Greek Revival has a typical large projecting portico. Attached two-story flat pillars with dentil-like carpenter details at the heads, suggest colossal Doric style. The simple clock tower and belfry rise in steps and are crowned with a relatively small aluminum spire which was attached in 1970. The original tall and graceful spire had been blown off in the high wind of 8 September 1869, according to Eleanor E. Farrar's quotation from Elijah Faunce's diary. Mr. Faunce, who was the carpenter working on the building, was related to her family. The belfry was completed in 1973, and the bell hung.

The front door, the apertures in the belfry, and also the tall side windows of the sanctuary have rounded heads in the Tuscan Greek style.

# HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community)

This is the 4th edifice of the Congregational church society in Abington—known since 1960 as the Abington United Church of Christ.

The first meetinghouse and, indeed, the first in the entire Old Township of Abington (now Abington, Rockland, and Whitman) was erected in 1710 on the high ground behind the present Route 18 Auto Body Shop at 325 Washington street. A plaque at the curb there commemorates it. (See Form #37, 325 Washington St. in this inventory.)

The organization of the present society was in 1711.

In 1751, the first meetinghouse was razed, and the large "blue church" was erected in what had been a corner of "Peter Nash's pasture" where Elm street now leads off from Washington street. This was a spot approximately in the front yard of the present church building and where blacktop paves the two present streets. That building has been dubbed the "blue church" because the townspeople voted, on 8 July 1751, "to colour the meetinghouse with a skie colour and mixe the colour with Lincett oyl."

The blue church was razed on 26 January 1819, according to Cyrus Nash (D-II:169-170), and useable timbers were worked into the framing of the third edifice. That third church is now the Masonic building (see Form #30, 416 Washington St. in this inventory). The used pieces can be seen in the attic where old mortise cuts did not match the present joints.

The third building was used only 30 years and then sold when the society moved into the present edifice in 1849. At that time, the society voted to call itself the First Parish Congregational Church of Abington, the "First Parish" being retained only for sentimental reasons, church and town government having been separated in 1806, and this being the only church society of that religious persuasion after Rockland and what is now Whitman had been cut off in 1874 and 1875, respectively.

In 1869, the cellar was further excavated and enlarged to become a hall, called the "vestry." This hall was used for many public affairs, including an evening's

(See Continuation Page)

# BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- ABINGTON, TOWN OF, Minutes of Town Meetings, 1713-1840. Transcription by Ezekiel R. Studley of Rockland (former East Ward of Abington) as it appeared in The Rockland Standard (weekly) from 23 August 1884 through 13 September 1901. Bound galley prints in Dyer Memorial library, 30 Centre avenue, Abington
- CYRUS NASH Papers. Transcription of diaries and journals of crippled unofficial historian (1780-1850; flourished 1804-1849). In Archives of Historical Society
- (See Continuation Page)



ABI.169

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: ABINGTON	Form No: 30.1
Property Name: ca. 400 Washington St	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

(HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE, continued)

program by Mark Twain on 17 December 1869, according to the late Eleanor Everett Farrar, writing for the Hundredth Anniversary of the building.

In 1873, the old center pulpit was removed and replaced by a reading desk, and in 1892, the building was wired for electricity.

In 1911, the interior was remodelled and a large organ was purchased from the West Newton church and installed, all through the generosity of heel-manufacturer William S. O'Brien.

The congregation voted to join the Evangelical and Reformed Church movement, and officially changed its name to the Abington United Church of Christ in 1960.

(BIBLIOGRAPHY, continued)

of Old Abington, Dyer Memorial Library building, 30 Centre Ave.

FARRAR, ELEANOR E., "Hundredth Anniversary of the Fourth Meetinghouse Building in Abington, Massachusetts," October 1949. MS in Archives of Historical Society of Old Abington, Dyer Memorial Library building, 30 Centre Ave.

WHEATLEY, ALMA C., Editor, 250th Anniversary of the First Parish Congregational Church, Abington, Massachusetts, 1711-1961. Pamphlet in Archives of the Historical Society of Old Abington, Dyer Memorial Library building, 30 Centre avenue, Abington



North side

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

From 1892 Business & Residential Directory



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,  
ABINGTON.



# INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
 MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
 220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
 BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town

*Abington*

Property Address

*400 Washington St.*

Area(s)

Form No.

*ABT 169*

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
 DIVISION OF INSPECTION  
 PLAN RECORD

CASE *B* RACK *6* APART. *25* NO. *73596*

BUILDING *First Parish Congregational* CHURCHES

CITY OR TOWN *Abington* STREET

TO BE USED FOR *Place of Assembly* CLASS

OWNER *Same*

ARCHITECT

CERTIFICATE APPROVAL—SPECIFICATION REQUIREMENTS—REFERRED

DATE

INSPECTOR *AV. BEAUDRY.*

Form BU. 1-2m-10-'36 No. 8932

